

**Government Statistics Section
Executive Committee Meeting
November 11, 2003**

Attendees

Wendy Alvey	Chair
Jana Asher	Program Chair Elect
Nancy Bates	Program Chair
Chet Bowie	Chair Elect Elect
Connie Citro	Secretary-Treasurer
John Czajka	Past Chair
Pat Doyle	COPAFS Rep
Brian Harris-Kojetin	Program Chair Elect Elect
Dan Kasprzyk	Council of Sections Rep Elect
Steve Porzio	ASA Associate Executive Director/Director of Operations
Nat Schenker	Chair Elect
Bill Smith	ASA Executive Director
Monica Smith	ASA Chapters and Sections Coordinator
Clyde Tucker	COPAFS Rep
Shelly Ver Ploeg	Publications Officer
Bill Wong	Editor, Amstat Online

Welcome and Minutes

The Winter meeting of the Government Statistics Section (GSS) Executive Committee was held Thursday, November 11, 2003, at the American Statistical Association (ASA) headquarters in Alexandria, VA. The meeting was called to order around 12:30 PM. The minutes of the August Executive Committee Meeting and the August Business Meeting were accepted with minor corrections. Wendy Alvey welcomed the new Executive Committee members: Chet Bowie, Chair Elect in 2004; Brian Harris-Kojetin, Program Chair Elect in 2004; and Dan Kasprzyk, Council of Sections (COS) Rep in 2004.

Executive Director's Report

Bill Smith reported on staff changes at the ASA Office – Nancy Hiatt retired suddenly and Monica Smith has been selected to fill her position. (M. Smith will be married December 6, 2003; her new name will be Monica Clark.) Marta Aliaga has been hired to fill the vacancy left by Mary Fleming, as Director of Programs. She oversees the Center for Statistics Education and Publications. Carol Edwards, Assistant Director of Publications, left, also. Now that Aliaga is on board, ASA is recruiting to fill Edwards' position.

B. Smith also reported on recent decisions of the ASA Board of Directors:

- The ASA is entering into a new agreement with the partner societies. The old agreement had a 5-year out clause, which the ASA exercised due to difficulties that arose on the business side. All of the partners have agreed to the new agreement. As part of the new arrangements, future Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) will be held in convention centers, instead of at hotels. This will permit more invited sessions and we will pay only for the rooms we use. Once the agreement is signed by all of the partners, B. Smith will appoint an implementation task force to deal with the details of the new arrangements.
- The Council of Sections voted to accept the new Section on Defense and Homeland Security. As a new Section, it is not entitled to any invited sessions in 2004 or 2005, although that could change under the new agreement. The Transportation Interest Group had also expressed interest in becoming a Section, but has not moved forward with those plans yet.
- Locations for the JSM have been based on rotations among a number major cities. Plans are to revise the selection criteria, with three areas of preferred cities, plus a second tier of smaller cities to chose from. The move to convention centers makes this change feasible.
- The ASA Board commissioned several consultants' reports and task force reports. One report focuses on membership marketing and stresses ideas for the "care and feeding" of first-year members, in order to retain new members. Another report looked at the publications and magazines and made recommendations involving *Chance*, *Stats*, *Inference*, and the *Current Index in Statistics*. The Board also received a report on the development campaign.
- The ASA Board voted to support efforts to organize special topics conferences by setting aside up to \$30,000 from the Strategic Planning Initiative funds for any-time use in support of small conferences. Sections are encouraged to submit proposals to the ASA for these funds.
- The Center for Statistics Education is being reorganized into three sections that focus on Continuing Education (Madge Haven and Rick Peterson); K-16 (new Assistant Director is coming soon); and Graduate Education and Research (a proposal for this new group will be presented to the Board). B. Smith said that over 500 people attended short courses at JSM in 2003 – mostly IT courses. He also reported that ASA recently hosted a mini-conference on teaching teachers to teach statistics. Teams from 19 areas nationwide participated, using funding from the Strategic Initiative funds set aside for special topics conferences. Plans are to hold another such conference in a couple of years.
- A fair number of 2003 Proceedings were sold at JSM this year. Once the Proceedings come out, the ASA expects sales to pick up again. Back issues of the CDs are still selling.
- Progress on the new building is delayed due to unanticipated problems with a high water table. As a result, the builder will not be able to provide three parking levels; two parking levels with 55 parking spaces are being projected instead. Negotiations are being held with the builder to amend the building contract. In the meantime, the ASA can continue to lease back space in the old building from the new owners. B. Smith noted that several existing

buildings have come available recently that offer the ASA other alternatives to the space they planned on using to build the new site. The ball is now in the builder's court. ASA is in good financial shape, so that is not a hold up.

JSM Programs

Nancy Bates said that, despite some last minute changes to the program, the JSM sessions went smoothly. The Executive Committee complimented her on the excellent job she did.

Jana Asher reported that GSS will have four invited sessions in 2004 – we won one in competition and had 3 allotted to us. She is working with Jonaki Bose, Social Statistics Section (SSS), and Partha Lahiri, Survey Research Methods Section (SRMS), on the rest of the program. Several topic contributed sessions have already been submitted and she is encouraging members to organize other topic contributed sessions. She is also working with the U.S. Census Bureau to avoid a repeat of last minute withdrawals.

Brian Harris-Kojetin will organize the luncheon roundtables for 2004. Asher gave him some pointers on how to identify topics and how many to organize. She also advised him not to promise anything too early. Just ask for proposals and then decide which ones to schedule.

Applications for Student Awards are due December 15th. One has been received thus far.

COPAFS Report

The October meeting of Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS) was cancelled due to Hurricane Isabel. Pat Doyle and Clyde Tucker have summarized the events of prior meetings in the COPAFS Column in *Amstat News*. The next meeting will be held December 12, 2003, and will feature presentations on the Survey of Income and Program Participation and on the Office of Management and Budget survey clearance process.

Slate for 2004

John Czajka organized the slate of candidates to run for office in 2004:

- Chair Elect – Stephanie Shipp and Kirsten West
- Program Chair Elect – Michael P. Cohen and Elizabeth Margoshes
- Secretary-Treasurer – Lenny Gaines and John Hall
- Publications Officer – Phil Steel and Robert Lussier.

Czajka replaces Pat Doyle as COPAFS Rep in 2004. Also, Connie Citro will be stepping down as Secretary-Treasurer a year early. She suggested asking Patty Becker to fulfill her term, since she ran against Becker for the office. According to the Section Officers' Handbook, someone else may be appointed to complete her term, with approval from the Executive Committee. The Committee indicated its support for Becker, although there was some discussion about whether there were funds in the budget to bring her into town for meetings.

ACTION ITEMS: *Wendy Alvey will ask Patty Becker if she would be willing to serve as Secretary-Treasurer for the remainder of Connie Citro's term (for calendar year 2004). Nat Schenker will try to arrange future meetings to coincide with COPAFS meetings or other events, which Becker typically attends in Washington, DC.*

Budget Reports

CD-ROM Proceedings – John Czajka reported that pre-sales of the CD-ROM Proceedings are slightly higher than in previous years. He also noted that ASA sold more CD-ROM Proceedings late in 2002 than expected. Nonetheless, overall, the CDs will continue to lose money compared to the hardcopy versions, because they are selling for only \$35 each – for both individual and institutional members. Before, if a person wanted more than one Section's Proceedings, he would have to pay separately for each volume; now, all Sections' papers are on one CD. The COS set the price based on feedback from the Sections, which indicated they did not want the Proceedings to be a moneymaker; they preferred to break even. Since first pricing the CD-ROMs, the price has been raised \$10, but has held steady for several years now. The cost, however, has increased, due to additional attributes the Sections asked for.

About 200 individual members have purchased CDs; the other half of the sales has been to libraries. The main reason most of the Sections are still showing positive returns is because of page charges. Funds from page charges go directly to the sponsoring Section. COS discussion about distributing revenues from page charges equally among the Sections met with resistance. Steve Porzio pointed out that he was approached about a multiple-user price for institutional use of the CD-ROMs. He suggested testing this out at \$250. The COS will discuss this as a new policy when it meets in February 2004.

Corporate Sponsors – Czajka will be sending out letters to Corporate sponsors shortly. In addition to past donors, he will send one to the Demographic Surveys Division, Census Bureau; and to the Veterans' Administration. It was agreed to wait another year before contacting the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Section Budgets – Connie Citro reported on the Section's budgets for this year and next. Porzio said that the rebate for the box lunches was credited in 2002. The draft budget for 2004 showed a small surplus of \$10.00. However, it was decided that the budget should assume that the Proceedings will break even, so in the final budget submitted to ASA, Citro reduced the sales amount for CD-ROM from \$1,400.00 to \$1,200.00, leaving a small projected operating deficit of \$190.00. Otherwise, the budgeted amounts for 2004 are similar to 2003. Citro submitted the budget in final form to ASA after the meeting.

Publications Officer Report

Shelly Ver Ploeg reported that the page limit for Proceedings papers has been increased – from 6 to 8 pages for contributed papers and 10 to 12 pages for invited papers. The layout has changed, too, which provides authors with more space per page. GSS speakers tend to pay relatively few page charges. A reminder should be sent out on the GSSLIST to encourage speakers to submit their papers to the Proceedings. We could also encourage them to ask their employers to pay

page charges -- \$15 per page. Point out that these charges support the Section. Porzio noted that these revenues get posted to the Sections' accounts when the money arrives.

Alvey announced that Pat Melvin has agreed to be the newsletter editor, filling the vacancy left by John Dixon. (Jared Gerstenbluth, who had previously agreed to serve as newsletter editor, changed his mind.) Stan Wasserman is the Publications Officer for the SSS. Alvey checked with Wasserman and he has no current plans to produce a newsletter. Since SSS has not produced a newsletter in a number of years and we are interested in having two newsletters a year, it was suggested that we could provide the labor, if SSS would fund the second newsletter.

ACTION ITEM: *Wendy Alvey will ask the new newsletter editor if she is willing to do two newsletters. If so, she will check with the SSS Chair about funding the effort.*

ASA Fellows Committee

The GSS' 2003 Fellows Committee identified a number of potential nominees and lined up people to submit their nomination packages. Of four identified this year, one will be resubmitted in 2004. Suggestions for other potential candidates should be passed along to the Committee. The GSS Fellows Committee is especially interested in hearing about State-level candidates and people who could sponsor their nominations.

Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship

Pat Doyle will be stepping down from the Wray Jackson Smith Scholarship (WJSS) Committee at the end of this year. The WJSS Fund has about \$20,000. The goal is to raise another \$5,000, which would make the scholarship self-sustaining. The Washington Statistical Society (WSS) has agreed to match contributions this year, so be sure and let the Committee know of any contributions made. The WJSS Committee is also seeking suggestions on how to elicit more applications. Only a few students applied this year. The electronic version of the application needs to be updated and forwarded to Bill Wong.

ACTION ITEM: *Wendy Alvey will appoint a successor for Doyle to join the WJSS.*

Strategic Initiatives

Performance Measures – Clyde Tucker suggested that the GSS could organize a Workshop on Performance Measurement. He noted that the WSS-sponsored Quality Conference will feature a session on the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). It requires us to set performance standards for managers and programs. Tucker pointed out that the statistical agencies need better technical quantitative measures. He encourages a broad, systematic attempt to develop performance measures. Since these measures are being integrated into the budget process, it is important to know if we are measuring the right things. How do we define useful variables and how should we measure them? Heretofore, the focus has been on customer satisfaction surveys. That is not adequate. Nancy Kirkendall is heading up an interagency team on performance measures for the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy. Tucker suggested a National Academy of Sciences roundtable or one-day workshop.

ACTION ITEM: Clyde Tucker will draft a proposal for a strategic initiative to fund a small workshop on performance measures. Strategic Initiative proposals are due March 1, 2004.

Establishment Surveys – Brenda Cox suggested that the GSS co-sponsor the next Establishment Surveys Conference with the SRMS. Plans are not underway yet, but it was raised to get GSS feedback. Typically, co-sponsors of SRMS conferences contribute seed money; SRMS puts up \$5,000. Sponsors then get a share of the profits. The conferences have always ended up in the black. GSS could offer to fund a \$1,000 scholarship for someone to attend. Usually around 400-600 attendees participate.

Web Surveys Workshop – The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) is organizing a one-day workshop on Web Surveys in April 2004. Wendy Alvey said that the organizing committee asked if GSS would be willing to co-sponsor the meeting. It would like GSS to collect registration and make arrangements for food during lunch and the breaks. Any proceeds above and beyond the costs of the food functions would go to GSS. The meeting will be held at the BLS' Conference Center, which is free, so no expenses will be needed to pay for space. Invitations, programs, and other similar incidentals will be absorbed by the sponsoring agencies. Plans are to produce a Proceedings volume as part of the FCSM's Statistical Policy Working Paper series. Participants would receive free registration, but probably not travel expenses. The Executive Committee members were interested in supporting this event, but were reluctant to do so without more specific details about the event and possible costs. They were wary about making a commitment, given the current tight budget situation.

ACTION ITEM: Wendy Alvey will forward more information about the Web Surveys Workshop to the Executive Committee.